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Commitment to Environmental Management in Hotels in Accra

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The sporadic development of hotel facilities in a developing West African city like Accra in Ghana, coupled with their consumption of natural resources and generation of waste has implications for environmental sustainability. This article therefore seeks to ascertain hotel managers' attitude towards environmental management and to examine their commitment to environmental management through the implementation of environmental policies and programs. The study took the form of a survey of managers of 200 hotels, ranging from budget to four-star rated, employing the stratified random sampling procedure. Though a greater number of hotel managers had a positive attitude towards environmental management, it was the upscale and larger hotels that were more committed to environmental management especially in terms of having; a designated officer responsible for environmental management, written environmental policy statement, environmental action plan, a history of implementing environmental programs and ecolabelling or environment related certification. The article proposes interhotel collaboration in environmental management so that smaller hotels could profit from the experiences and resources of larger hotels.

KEYWORDS *environmental, management, attitude, policy, hotels, managers*

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BACKGROUND

Ghana has become one of the popular tourist destinations in West Africa. The immediate post-independence era of the country, which spanned 1957 to 1976, saw the establishment of state-owned hotels in all regional capitals of the country by the first president Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. In 1962, the government established the State Hotels Corporation to oversee the running of the state hotels. The accommodation sector in Ghana has however in recent times experienced greater foreign investment and a steady growth due to the government's investment promotion drive coupled with a sustained increase in tourist arrivals. The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act (Act 478) which was passed in 1994 provides generous investment incentives such as free repatriation of profits, remittances by expatriate personnel and import duty exemptions. This has attracted foreigners and multinational enterprises to invest in the hotel industry. Konadu-Agyemang (2001) is of the opinion that the investment code that was inspired by the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) embarked on by the government between 1983 and 1999 allowed foreign investment in the tourism industry, including hotels and resorts.

Tourist arrivals in Ghana grew from 399,000 in 2000 to 698,069 in 2008 and during the same period, the number of registered hotels grew from 992 to 1,595 (Ghana Tourist Board [GTB], 2009) as a corollary of increase in tourist arrivals. However, the geographical distribution of hotels has been uneven across the country with the Greater Accra region alone accounting for about 40% of the total number of registered hotels (Mensah, 2009). This is due to the fact that Accra is the capital city with all the trappings of commercial, political and leisure activities as well as infrastructure. The city is also undergoing rapid urbanization. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2008), the Accra Metropolitan Area accounts for 25% of all urban dwellers in Ghana and this is growing at the rate of 4.2%. As a consequence, hotel development has been sporadic especially with regards to budget hotels, which are spread out throughout the city sometimes without recourse to town and country planning guidelines and GTB requirements. Much as rapid hotel development in Accra is economically desirable, it is also a cause for concern since the sporadic development of hotel facilities has implications for environmental sustainability.

The fact is hotels generate enormous amounts of waste such as sewage, grey water, and garbage. Hotel operations also make huge demands on natural resources including energy, water, wood, and minerals. An estimated 75% of the environmental impacts of the hotel industry can be attributed to the excessive consumption of both local and imported nondurable goods, energy, and water (APAT, 2002). Also, waste is the most visible impact of hotels on the environment (Bohdanowicz & Martinac, 2003). The environmental impacts of the hotel industry is exacerbated by the fact that apart

from rooms, hotels also provide other facilities such as restaurants, night clubs, shopping malls, swimming pools, car parks, and golf courses thereby causing other indirect and induced impacts on the environment. According to the American Hotel and Motel Association, the average hotel guest generates between 1.0 and 2.5 pounds of waste per room every day (Cartier, 2008). Lam and Chan (1994), in their study of the energy consumption of hotels, estimated that the average electrical energy requirement in hotels in Hong Kong was 366 KW h/m². Salem (1995) also concluded that 15,000 cubic metres of water is consumed by 100 hotel guests in a luxury hotel for 55 days whilst the same amount of water could serve the needs of 100 rural farmers for 3 years. The use of disproportionate amounts of natural resources by hotels tends to deprive host communities of essential resources to meet their own needs and this is contrary to the basic tenets of sustainable development. It could also stifle progress towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG 7), which is the achievement of environmental sustainability (United Nations, 2011).

The government of Ghana, in order to ensure that businesses and projects including hotel development and operations do not degrade the environment, has established state institutions and enacted laws to exact environmental compliance by businesses. The GTB, Town and Country Planning, as well as District Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies play diverse roles in ensuring that hotels do not degrade the environment. However, the main regulatory body is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which is empowered by the EPA Act (Act 490), to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and laws. This act requires new hotel developers to register with the EPA, conduct an environmental impact assessment of their proposed projects and submit an environmental assessment report to the EPA for review. If the EPA is satisfied, an environmental permit is granted for the commencement of the project. Hotels are further required to submit Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) after 18 months of operation.

In spite of all these measures, it appears some hotels are not complying with the requirements of the EPA and this is generating concerns about the impacts of hotels on the environment. In the 1996 Tourism Development Plan for Ghana, for instance, there is recognition that the disposal of sewage and solid waste is a problem in some hotels and that this could lead to pollution of rivers, lakes, and coastal water with sewerage as well as pollution of ground water through seepage of waste materials resulting from improper development of sewerage and solid waste disposal systems in hotels and other facilities. Moreover, the extent to which management of hotels are committed to mitigating the impacts of their operations on the environment, is not exactly known.

Indeed, there have been reported cases of pollution and inappropriate discharge of waste from some hotels. A case in point was the report of a

magistrate court in *Subum* convicting a hotel manageress for failing to stem the spillage of offensive effluent from a septic tank of her hotel into a public area (Ghana News Agency, 2009). According to Pigram (1995) tourism could contribute to environmental degradation and be self-destructive, though it also has the potential of bringing about significant enhancement of the environment. It is therefore imperative for hotels to undertake environmental management and to engage in more environmentally sustainable practices so as not to “kill the goose that lays the golden egg.” During the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism held in Lanzarote, Spain in 1995, there was the recognition that sustainable hotels lead to sustainable destinations, which in turn lead to successful hotel businesses. Since 1995, other conferences have been held to re-echo hotels and sustainability issues, including the Sustainable Hotels for Sustainable Destinations International Conference held in Maspalomas, Canary Islands in October 2000.

In response to calls for sustainable practices, hotels in mostly the developed world are actively involved in environmental management through policies, programs, and other initiatives. The literature is replete with cases of environmental management initiatives and sustainable tourism practices by hotel businesses and trade associations. Reference can be made to environmental initiatives by International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHED), Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), International Hotels and Restaurants Association (IHRA), and Asian Pacific Hotels Environment Initiative (APHEI). At the corporate level, the environmental policies, programs, and initiatives of multinational hotel businesses like Marriott, Accor, and Radisson SAS are well documented in the literature (Lee & Park, 2009; El Dief & Font, 2010). However, not much is known about the environmental management initiatives of the hotel industry in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the attitude of hotel managers in Accra to environmental management and the resulting policies, programs, and initiatives they have undertaken to indicate their commitment to environmental management. Environmental commitment in this study means the adoption by management of a hotel of appropriate policies, structures, and programs to facilitate environmental management within their organizations. The study also examines the relationship between environmental commitment and category of hotel in terms of size (number of guestrooms) and quality (star-rating).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental Management in Hotels

Environmental management emerged in the 1980s as a new and vital aspect of management, and had been adopted by an increasing number of firms by the 1990s (Worcester, 1994). Kessler, Van Giniken, Cornelissen, and

Romijn (2001) based on the definition of Lovei and Weiss (1998) provide a comprehensive definition of environmental management. According to them;

Environmental management is a process in which (formal and informal, public and private) organizations apply mechanisms to develop and implement a set of cost-effective priority actions on the basis of well-articulated societal preferences and goals for the maintenance or improvement of ambient environmental quality; the provision of environmentally derived or related services; and/or the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of natural resources and ecosystems.

Environmental management practices and initiatives by hotel businesses include environmental policy formulation, green purchasing, compliance with environmental laws and regulations, environmental auditing, ecolabelling and certification, waste management and recycling, water and energy conservation, environmental education, pollution prevention, environmentally responsible marketing, and support for local communities (Bohdanowicz, 2006; Erdogan & Baris, 2007). However, the most popular environmental management practices in the hotel industry are those geared towards cost savings, waste management, and recycling, as well as energy and water conservation (Mensah, 2007; Siti-Nabiha et al., 2011).

The environmental performance of hotels however depends to a large extent on the hotel manager's and/or owner's attitude towards change; their knowledge of the benefits of environmental practices and relations with the external environment (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Erdogan & Baris, 2007). However, the degree of top management commitment to environmental management varies depending on their perceptions of environmental issues (Banerjee, 2002). Research has shown that hotel managers seem to be aware of the environmental problems confronting the tourism industry (Kim & Yoon, 2010) and perceive the impacts of their operations on the environment to be moderate to significant (Bohdanowicz, Zanki-Alujevic, & Martinac, 2004). They also perceive their involvement in environmental management practices as leading to the reduction of costs through operational efficiency (Tzschentke, Kirk, & Lynch, 2004; Bohdanowicz, 2005).

Available literature generally suggests that larger hotels are more proactive or more committed to environmental management (Mawforth & Munt 1998; Edwards, 2000; Alvarez-Gil, Burgos-Jimenez, & Cespedes-Lorente, 2001; Mensah 2006). Mawforth and Munt (1998) attributed this to the fact that small and medium scale accommodation companies do not have the capital resources or internal structures to conduct environmental management. Large firms are assumed to have idle resources, more formal approach to environmental management and enjoy economies of scale in the use of wastes (Cespedes-Lorente, Burgos-Jimenez, & Alvarez-Gil, 2003). They are also more visible; receive stronger pressures for environmental performance

from various stakeholders, and are more sensitive to reputation damages (Branzei, Jennings, & Vertinsky, 2002).

Commitment to Environmental Management

For hotels to show commitment to environmental management, they must institute appropriate pro-environmental policies, programs, and initiatives. According to Kirk (1995) the principles of environmental management have been established in the framework of British Standard (BS 7750) Environmental Management Systems which outlines procedures including formulation of environmental policy, ensuring total organizational commitment, determination of responsibilities and implementation of management systems.

The development of a written environmental policy is the first step in the environmental management process (Kirk, 1995). In spite of this, available evidence suggests that a number of hotels do not have environmental policies. Penny (2007) in a study of hotels in Macao found out that only 29.7% of the hotels had a written environmental policy. Also, 10% of hotels in Ankara, Turkey were found to have written environmental policies (Erdogan & Baris, 2007). However, Bohdanowicz (2005) discovered that chain affiliated hotels such as Sheraton, Hilton and Accor were more proactive in the formulation of environmental policy than the independent ones.

The nature of hotel operations requires substantial purchases of various foodstuffs, materials, detergents, and other supplies which could be detrimental to the environment. The need to procure supplies that are eco-friendly calls for environmental purchasing. Through green purchasing practices, an organization can address issues such as waste reduction, material substitution through environmental sourcing of raw materials, and waste minimization of hazardous materials (Rao & Holt, 2005). Green purchasing also reduces risk of injury to staff and guests, and indeed avoids liability (Siegelbaum, 2005). The Scandic Hotel chain, for instance, was able to prevent the disposal of 200 million items of disposable packaging in 7 years by incorporating a green purchasing policy into its environmental management program (Bohdanowicz, 2005).

Ecolabelling as a voluntary environmental management tool is increasingly becoming popular especially in the accommodation sector. According to Font and Bendell (2002), 68% of ecolabels in the tourism industry is awarded to the accommodation sector. In 1999 and 2000 alone, over two thousand hotels, campsites, hostels, and restaurants in Europe were certified and awarded ecolabels (Hamele, 2004). Ecolabels operating in the tourism and hospitality industry include Ecohotel, EcoMeet, Ecotel, Green Key, Green Leaf, Green Seal, Green Globe 21, and Green Deal. Some certification schemes committed to the development of Environmental Management Systems in the tourism and hospitality industry are International Standard

Organization (ISO 14000) and the Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). According to Meade and Pringle (2001), hotels and resorts around the world are currently adopting environmental management systems in order to improve resource use efficiency, reduce operating costs, increase staff involvement and guest awareness, and gaining international recognition in the travel and tourism marketplace.

Management's commitment to environmental initiatives is also an important prerequisite for successful environmental management (Bansal & Roth, 2000). A number of hotels and hotel groups have undertaken various programs to safeguard the environment. These include Hilton's Environmental Reporting, Accor's Earth Guest Program, Green Marriott, and the Rezidor Group's Responsible Business (El Dief & Font, 2010). As part of Marriott's environmental initiative it undertakes community-involvement projects, which include America's Promise Child Care and Family Services (Lee & Park, 2009). Also, Novotel and Hotel Ibis Homebush Bay of Australia are in a unique partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), whereby \$1.00 from every room sold per night is donated by the hotels to the latter to support its conservation activities (Hotel-Online, 2002). According to Ernst & Young (2008) in a report commissioned by the hospitality industry, indicated that hotel companies are increasingly encouraging environmentally friendly practices and embracing sustainability through both developmental and organizational strategies. The report identified regional environmental initiatives by the hospitality industry on all continents except Africa.

METHODOLOGY

This article is part of a larger study undertaken on environmental performance of hotels in Accra. The study covered hotels in the 11 sub-metros of the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) as well as Ga East Municipal Area, Ga West Municipal Area, Ga South Municipal Area, Adenta Municipal Area, and Ledzokuku Krowor Municipal Area (Figure 1).

This area was chosen because it has the largest concentration of all classes of hotels in Ghana. Data for this study was obtained through a cross-sectional survey involving managers of sampled hotels. The target population was all managers of all categories of hotels and Guest Houses in Accra. The survey was undertaken during the months of June and August 2010. The stratified random sampling procedure was employed for the selection of a total of 243 hotels from the different categories of hotels (Table 1). However, 200 of the completed questionnaires were found to be suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 82.30% as shown in Table 2. The stratified random sampling method was preferred because it allowed all subgroups within the population namely, the various classes of hotels to be represented



FIGURE 1 Map of study area.

Source: GIS Unit, Department of Geography & Regional Planning, UCC (color figure available online).

TABLE 1 Rating of Hotels in Ghana

Hotel category	Description
Budget	Provides the barest minimum of furnishing with no facilities, amenities, or guest services.
Guest house	Meets all the requirements of a star-rated facility but has less than 11 rooms.
One star	Provides basic furnishing and very limited or no facilities, amenities, and guest services (hot and cold water in room, central heating, etc.).
Two star	Provides more furnishing and some facilities, amenities, and guest services (breakfast/dining, room, TV lounge, etc.).
Three star	Provides better quality furnishing and a more extensive range of facilities, amenities, and guest services (private bath/shower, lounge area, bar, restaurant, staff assistance throughout the day, etc.).
Four star	Provides superior quality furnishing and a complete range of facilities, amenities, and guest services (all rooms with bath, direct dial telephone, radio and TV set, individual control heating and air conditioning, full room service, some shops and sporting facilities, etc.).
Five star	Provides deluxe accommodation and marked superiority in the extent and quality of facilities, amenities, and guest services (mini bar in rooms, 24-hour laundry service, several bars, restaurant and lounges, health club, shopping arcade, etc.).

Source: Ghana Tourist Board.

in the sample. The basis of the stratification was the class or rating of the hotels (i.e., from budget to five-star hotels).

The sample was drawn on the basis of the four steps outlined by Sarantakos (2005). First, the target population was divided into six strata

TABLE 2 Sample and Response Rate

Class of hotel	Target population	Sample		Response rate	
	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Five-star	1	1	0.41	0	0.0
Four-star	4	4	1.65	4	100.0
Three-star	7	7	2.88	7	100.0
Two-star	71	55	22.63	39	70.9
One-star	58	33	13.58	25	75.8
Guest house	62	44	18.11	41	93.2
Budget	380	99	40.74	84	84.8
Total	583	243	100.00	200	82.30

based on the classifications of hotels by the GTB (i.e., budget, guest house, and one-star through five-star). Since there was only 1 five-star hotel in the study area, it was added to the four-star hotels to constitute one stratum. Second, the sample frame for each stratum was extracted from the GTB list of registered hotels for 2009. Third, a sample size was allocated to each stratum to ensure that each class of hotel and guest house was adequately represented in the overall sample. In view of this, all hotels in the three, four and five star categories were selected due to the small size of their population. Fourth, a sample was randomly selected from the sample frame of each stratum using random numbers generated from a random numbers table. Finally, the samples picked from each stratum were put together to constitute the overall sample size for the study.

A structured questionnaire was employed for the collection of data. This was first pretested in Cape Coast and Elmina to make the instruments more relevant and appropriate as well as to ensure content validity for the actual data collection. The questionnaire contained close-ended questions to elicit information on environmental management commitment of respondents', their socio-demographic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status and level of education. A Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was used to determine managers' attitude towards environmental management. A scale developed by the Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association for measuring attitudes regarding environmental action in the lodging industry was adapted for this study (Stipanuk & Ninemeier, 1996). Other questions were on the characteristics of their organizations, such as staff strength, ownership, classification, and their environmental management practices, as well as their attitudes towards environmental management. The section on environmental management commitment comprised of eight questions intended to measure managers' commitment to environmental management. The questions sought to find out if they had initiated environmental programs, designated officers responsible for environmental management, written environmental policy statements,

had a history of implementation of environmental programs, formulated environmental action plans as well as whether they undertook environmental purchasing, offered environmental friendly products or subscribed to ecolabels or other environment related certification. The questionnaires were mainly self-administered. Personal calls were made to the hotels by the researcher and his field assistants to ensure high response. However, in a few instances, the substitution sampling method had to be employed where a sampled hotel manager declined to take part in the survey. A hotel of a similar class was randomly sampled from the list of remaining hotels in the sample frame and the manager contacted. The data collected from the field was edited, coded and processed using SPSS software, version 16.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Characteristics of Hotel Managers and Hotels

Table 3 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents. They were mostly (56.8%) between the ages of 21 and 39, and 59.5% were married. Most of them (60%) had completed tertiary-level education with monthly incomes mostly (77.7%) between ₵50 and ₵450. They were also predominantly Christians (95.5%) with just 4% being Muslims. They were overwhelmingly Ghanaians (98.5%).

Majority of hotels (94.4%) covered in the study were independent and entirely owned by Ghanaians (93.9%). Only 11.6% were affiliated to foreign multinational companies in the form of franchises, management contract or joint ventures. In a related study by Rivera (2004) on hotels in Costa Rica, he also discovered that 93.90% of the hotels were not affiliated. Also, in this study, about 82% of the hotels employed less than 20 people while 67% has less than 20 guestrooms, indicating the fragmented nature of the hotel industry in Ghana, which consists of relatively small units.

Relationship Between Class of Hotel and Organizational Characteristics

Chi-square tests at significance level $p < .05$ revealed significant relationships existed between class of hotel and other organizational characteristics such as ownership, affiliation and size of hotel (Table 4). Half (50%) of the three- and four-star hotels were owned by foreign individuals and organizations while 97.6% of the budget hotels had entirely Ghanaian ownership.

Almost all hotels ranging from the budget to two-star categories were independent. The majority (63.6%) of hotels in the three- to four-star category were however affiliated to multinationals.

The data further suggests that there is a direct relationship between size of hotel and class of hotel; generally, the higher the class of a hotel,

TABLE 3 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Age Less than 20	8	4.0
21–39	113	56.8
40–59	69	34.7
60 or more	9	4.5
Total	199	100
Gender		
Male	140	70
Female	60	30
Total	200	100
Level of education		
Primary	3	1.5
Secondary	65	32.5
Tertiary	132	66.0
Total	200	100
Religious affiliation		
Christian	191	95.5
Muslim	8	4.0
Other	1	0.5
Total	200	100
Marital status		
Single	70	35.0
Married	119	59.5
Separated	8	4.0
Widowed	3	1.5
Total	200	100
Monthly income		
Less than ₵50	9	5.0
₵50–₵450	139	77.7
More than ₵450	31	17.3
Total	179	100
Nationality		
Ghanaian	197	98.5
Other	3	1.5
Total	200	100

the greater the number of rooms. The guesthouses had the least number of rooms as 90.2% of them had less than 20 rooms. This is not surprising because, by GTB definition, a guesthouse is an accommodation facility with standards like a star-rated hotel but has less than 11 rooms while budget hotels could have less than 11 rooms. However, none of the three- four-star hotels had less than 20 rooms. The star-rated hotels normally had more than 10 rooms.

Managers' Attitude Towards Environmental Management by Hotels

Generally, a greater number of hotel managers had a positive attitude towards environmental management by hotels as shown in [Table 5](#). They

TABLE 4 Relationship Between Class of Hotel and Other Organizational Characteristics

	Class of hotel				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	Budget	Guest house	1–2 star	3–4 star		
Affiliation (<i>n</i> = 198)						
Independent	97.6	100.0	96.9	36.4	75.36	.000
Affiliated	2.4	0.0	3.1	63.6		
Size (<i>n</i> = 199)						
Less than 20 guest rooms	78.6	90.2	49.2	0.0	158.81	.000
20–59	21.4	9.8	44.4	9.1		
60–99	0.0	0.0	4.8	27.3		
100 or more	0.0	0.0	1.6	63.6		
Ownership (<i>n</i> = 198)						
Entirely local	97.6	97.4	93.8	50.0	36.58	.000
Foreign	2.4	2.6	6.3	50.0		

TABLE 5 Hotel Managers' Environmental Attitude

Statements of environmental initiatives/issues	Total	Agreement percentage ^a	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Hotels have a moral responsibility to protect the environment	200	90.5	4.63	0.77
Improvement in environmental performance will lead to improved financial performance	200	91.5	4.61	0.76
Taking positive action on environmental issues contributes to the hotel's brand image and competitive market position	199	87.9	4.50	0.81
Hotels contribute to local and global environmental problems through their operations.	200	72.5	4.04	1.23
The hotel industry will be increasingly pressurized by government to take action on environmental issues.	200	71.5	4.24	1.08

^aAgreement percentage is composed of both respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, based on a scale of 1–5 (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*).

were mostly in agreement with various statements regarding environmental performance of hotels. Respondents strongly agreed that hotels had a moral responsibility to protect the environment ($M = 4.63$) and that improved environmental performance will lead to improved financial performance ($M = 4.61$).

A greater majority of the managers (90.5%) were in agreement with the statement that hotels have a moral responsibility to protect the environment. Also, 91.5% agreed that improved environmental performance will lead to improved financial performance. This supports the findings of similar studies where hotel managers perceived their involvement in environmental management practices as leading to the reduction of costs through operational efficiency (Tzschentke et al., 2004; Bohdanowicz, 2005). Most Hotel Managers in Accra therefore know that they have a moral responsibility to safeguard the environment. They also reckon that there are both financial

benefits and competitive advantages to be derived when they improve their environmental performance. There was also general agreement among hotel managers that hotels contribute to global environmental problems through their operations ($M = 4.04$) and that they will be increasingly pressurized by government to take action on environmental issues ($M = 4.24$). Though about a quarter (27%) was not in agreement with the assertion that hotels contribute to global environmental problems through their operations and another 28.5% disagreed that governments will increasingly pressurize hotels to take action on environmental issues. Therefore about a quarter of hotel managers in Accra do not share the view that they are partly to blame for the environmental problems confronting the world.

Commitment to Environmental Management

In terms of the environmental policies and programs hotel managers had instituted to accentuate their commitment to undertaking environmental management, [Table 6](#) shows that hotel managers were less committed to formulating and writing environmental policy statements as well as subscribing to ecolabels or other environment related certification since only 8.5% of them had undertaken these activities. However, majority of them were involved in environmental purchasing (78%) and offer of environmental friendly products and services (78.9%).

Though [Brown \(1996\)](#) and [Kirk \(1995\)](#) emphasized the indispensability of environmental policy by an organization undertaking environmental management, only 8.5% of the hotels had written environmental policy statements. This finding is similar to observations made by [Erdogan and Baris \(2007\)](#) in Ankara, Turkey where 10% of hotels had written environmental policies. Also, the small percentage of hotels subscribing to ecolabels or other environmental certification schemes underscores the fact that the hotel industry in Ghana lacks voluntary environmental initiative. At the moment, there is not a single home-grown ecolabel for the hotel industry though ecolabels are becoming popular in other parts of the globe ([Font & Bendel, 2002](#); [Hamele, 2004](#)).

TABLE 6 Hotels Adopting Environmental Policies and Programs ($N = 200$)

Environmental management policy and programs	Frequency	%
Designated officer responsible for environmental management	48	24.0
Written environmental policy statement	17	8.5
Environmental action plan	67	33.5
Environmental purchasing	156	78.0
Offer of environmentally friendly products and services	157	78.9
Initiatives in improved environmental performance	68	34.0
History of environmental programs implementation	50	25.1
Ecolabel or environment-related certification	17	8.5

About a quarter of the hotels 24% had designated officers responsible for environmental management. This means more than three quarters did not have people who were specifically tasked with coordinating the environmental management function of the hotels.

Even for those hotels which claimed to have designated officers as indicated in Figure 2, these officers were mainly sanitation officers and cleaners (28%) or the managers themselves (26%). Indeed it appears the environmental management function was most often part of the roles of a variety of employees and not any exclusive position. This is understandable because the two- to five-star rated hotels, which would usually have such structures in place constitute just a quarter (25%) of the hotels surveyed. Management of the hotels see environmental management as an integral part of their day-to-day administrative functions that could be undertaken by the general manager, housekeeper, or technician. Also, the findings seem to suggest that environmental management was loosely associated with cleaning or waste management, which accounts for 28% of the designated officers being sanitation officers or cleaners.

Barely one third of the hotels (34%) had initiated environmental programs reflecting the general lack of voluntary environmental initiative in the hotel industry in Ghana. However, the environmental programs, initiated were mostly centered on waste management and sanitation (59%) as shown in Figure 3. This state of affairs could have been informed by the fact that waste is the most visible impact of hotels on the environment (Bohdanowicz & Martinac, 2003). There is therefore a greater tendency

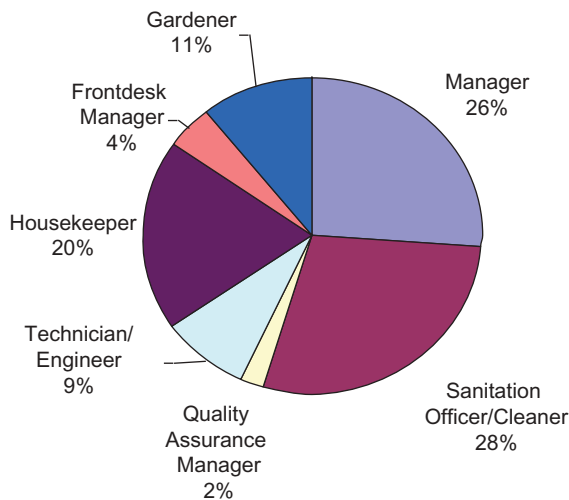


FIGURE 2 Designation of officers in charge of environmental management (color figure available online).

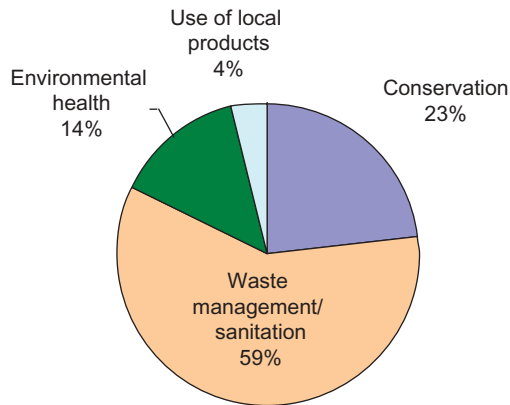


FIGURE 3 Initiatives in improved environmental performance (color figure available online).

to clean up waste generated so that the commitment of the hotels to environmental management will be more apparent.

Most of the hotels did not have a history of implementing environmental programs; indeed only a quarter of them (25.1%) had a history of implementing environmental programs, suggesting that environmental management was a fairly recent undertaking in the hotel sector in Ghana.

Class of Hotel and Commitment to Environmental Management

As shown in [Table 7](#), there were significant relationships between class of hotel and environmental management commitment. Chi-square tests at significance level $p < .05$ indicated that there were significant relationships between class of hotel and environmental commitment as evident in the environmental policies and programs instituted by the hotels.

There were significant relationships between class of hotel and some environmental activities namely; designating an officer responsible for environmental management, formulating and writing environmental policy statements, initiating environmental programs to improve environmental performance, ecolabelling or environment related certification, and having a history of environmental programs implementation. There were, however, no significant relationships between class of hotel and environmental action plan, environmental purchasing, and environmental friendly products and services suggesting that hotels, irrespective of their class, undertake these activities. However, the higher the quality (class) of a hotel, the greater the probability that it has a designated officer in charge of environmental management, had initiated environmental programs, subscribes to an ecolabel or an environment related certification and the greater the probability that it had formulated an environmental policy. This supports the findings of

TABLE 7 Class of Hotel and Environmental Commitment

Environmental management policy/program	Class of hotel				χ^2	p
	Budget $n = 84$	Guest House $n = 41$	1–2 star $n = 64$	3–4 star $n = 11$		
Named officer responsible for environmental management	16.7	22.0	29.7	54.5	9.33	.025
Written environmental policy statement	2.4	4.9	10.9	54.5	35.21	.000
Environmental action plan	27.4	31.7	39.1	54.5	4.55	.208
Environmental purchasing	72.6	73.2	85.9	90.9	5.39	.145
Offer of environmental friendly products and services	77.4	75.6	81.0	90.9	1.50	.683
Initiatives in improved environmental performance	25.0	31.7	46.9	36.4	7.88	.048
History of environmental programs implementation	14.3	29.3	28.6	72.7	19.27	.000
Ecolabel or environment related accreditation	2.4	2.4	14.1	45.5	27.95	.022

Bohdanowicz (2005) in a study conducted on European hotels, that chain-affiliated hotels such as Sheraton, Hilton, and Accor were more proactive in the formulation of environmental policy than the independent ones. This is because the three- and four-star hotels were mostly (63.6%) chain-affiliated compared to 2.4% and 3.1% of the budget and one- and two-star hotels, respectively (Table 4). Indeed more than half (54.5%) of the three- and four-star hotels had written environmental policy statements compared to 2.4% and 4.9% of the budget hotels and guest houses, respectively.

The fact that more than half (54.5%) of three- and four-star hotels had a designated officer responsible for environmental management compared to 16.7% of the budget hotels could be attributed to the fact that it is upscale hotels that have proper systems and management structures in place. Also, it is environmental initiatives of mostly the multinational hotel chains that are documented in the literature (see Bohdanowicz et al., 2006; Lee & Park, 2009; El Dief & Font, 2010). It is therefore not surprising that only 14.3% and 29.3% of the budget and guesthouses, respectively had initiated environmental programs.

Size of Hotel and Commitment to Environmental Management

Size of hotel was determined by the number of guestrooms. A chi-square test at $p < .05$ indicate significant relationships in some of the environmental management policies, programs, and activities and the size of the hotels as shown in Table 8.

The areas of environmental commitment that had no significant relationships with size of hotel were environmental purchasing, environmental

TABLE 8 Size of Hotel and Environmental Commitment

Environmental management policy/program	Size of hotel (No. of guest rooms)				χ^2	p
	< 20 $n = 134$	20–59 $n = 51$	60–99 $n = 6$	100 + $n = 8$		
Named officer responsible for environmental management	22.4	23.5	16.7	62.5	6.85	.077
Written environmental policy statement	3.7	11.8	0.0	75.0	50.43	.000
Environmental action plan	27.6	45.1	16.7	62.5	8.98	.030
Environmental purchasing	75.4	82.4	83.3	87.5	1.62	.656
Offer of environmental friendly products and services	76.1	84.0	83.3	87.5	1.82	.610
Initiatives in improved environmental performance	29.1	47.1	33.3	37.5	5.34	.149
History of environmental programs implementation	20.9	28.0	16.7	87.5	18.20	.000
Ecolabel or environment-related accreditation	3.0	13.7	16.7	62.5	34.41	.003

friendly products and services, as well as initiatives in improved environmental performance. Therefore the larger a hotel, the greater the probability that it has a named officer responsible for environmental management, written environmental policy statement, environmental action plan, a history of environmental programs implementation, and subscribed to an ecolabel or environment related certification. These findings seem to suggest that larger hotels are more committed to environmental management (Mawforth & Munt, 1998; Edwards, 2000; Alvarez-Gil et al., 2001; Mensah, 2006). This is due to the fact that there is a positive relationship between class of hotel and size of hotel. In this study, 63.6% of hotels in the three- and four-star hotels category had 100 guestrooms or more but none of the budget hotels and guesthouses had 60 guestrooms. Hotels with 100 or more guestrooms were generally more likely to have environmental policies and programs in place except in the case of initiatives in improved environmental performance, offer of environmentally friendly products and services as well as environmental purchasing where the differences among the different classes of hotels was not significant.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Though hotel managers had a positive attitude towards environmental management, they had not instituted adequate policies and program to enhance environmental management. The majority of hotel managers (90.5%) were cognizant of the fact that they had a moral responsibility to protect the environment and were also aware of the benefits to be derived from improved

environmental performance which include improved financial performance, improved brand image and competitive market position. About 73% were also aware that they have a hand in the environmental problems confronting the globe. With such attitude one would have expected them to be more proactive in addressing some of the environmental concerns through policies, programs and initiatives.

However, there was a general lack of environmental initiative. Only 8.5% had written environmental policies. Having an environmental policy is a *sin qua non* for improved environmental performance because it provides the guidelines for a hotel's entire environmental activities. More so, about 76% of the hotels did not have a designated officer responsible for environmental management, 66.5% did not have an environmental action plan and 66% had not taken initiatives to improve their environmental performance. These suggest that hotels in Accra are not instituting adequate measures to improve their environmental performance because the key ingredients for successful environmental management program are lacking. The fact that only 8.5% of hotels in this study were associated with ecolabels or other environment related certification further reinforces managers' inertia with regards to voluntary environmental initiatives.

It is, however, important to acknowledge the fact that managers' having a positive attitude towards environmental management is necessary for the realization of improved environmental performance but not a sufficient condition. The knowledge and resources at their disposal also counts and this probably explains why larger and upscale hotels are more committed to initiating environmental policies and programs. Hotels with more than 100 rooms or three- and four-star hotels were the most committed to instituting environmental policies and programs such as written environmental policies, named officer responsible for environmental management, having a relatively longer history of implementing environmental programs, and subscription to ecolabels or environment-related certification. The budget hotels and guesthouses were less committed to environmental initiatives probably due to the fact that managers lack the knowledge, resources and structures for undertaking environmental management programs. Ironically, it is hotels in this category that form the bulk of accommodation stock in Ghana. Budget hotels accounted for 66% of hotels in Ghana (GTB, 2009). Their cumulative impact on the environment could therefore be substantial.

It is therefore suggested that there should be interhotel collaboration towards helping smaller hotels that do not have the capacity and resources to carry out environmental management. The bigger hotels could transfer their knowledge and experience in environmental management to the smaller ones through such collaborations. The Ghana Hotels Association, which is the hotel trade association in Ghana, could serve as a useful platform for such collaboration. On this platform, joint voluntary environmental initiatives could also be undertaken since it is more expensive for a single independent

hotel to do it alone. Environmental initiatives undertaken by hotel associations such as the Green Key eco-rating program of the Hotels Association of Canada, American Hotel and Lodging Association's Green Earthkeeping program and the eco-rating guides for hotels initiated by the Bali Hotels Association have been resounding success stories. There should also be periodic training and education programs by government agencies such as EPA and GTB for hotel managers in order to update their knowledge on environmental management issues and internationally accepted best practices.

Finally, the major limitation with this study is the lack of qualitative depth to enable an understanding of the thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes of hotel managers towards environmental management. There is the need to gain more insights into the attitudes of hotel managers. The belief, knowledge and behaviour of hotel managers and how that informs their attitude towards environmental management need to be explored further. A more qualitative approach to this study will help unearth the fine details that are missing in this study, including the gap between environmental attitude and commitment. The results of such a study will also help policymakers and regulators to map out appropriate interventions for enhancing the environmental performance of hotels.

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